## CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. (currently amended) A method for controlling the position of a mandrel ~~(10)~~ that is mounted in a hydraulic extrusion apparatus comprising a cylinder and a piston that form a piercing cylinder ~~(8)~~, of an extrusion press for producing pipes ~~(2)~~ that are extruded from billets ~~(4)~~ that are loaded into a holder ~~(5)~~ mounted upstream from the extrusion die ~~(3)~~ and pierced by means of the mandrel ~~(10)~~, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the piercing cylinder ~~(8)~~ is directly driven by pumps ~~(11)~~ that are adjusted to a defined pumping volume as a function of the extrusion speed and that a further pumping volume is added to the previously computed pump conveying volume, a control valve ~~(16)~~ acting upon the front ring compartment ~~(12)~~ of the piercing cylinder ~~(8)~~ being connected to a ~~sump~~ tank ~~(17)~~ for the purpose of controlling the position of the mandrel ~~(10)~~.

2. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the outlet pressure of the piercing cylinder ~~(8)~~ is adjusted to a defined pressure.

3. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1 [[or 2]], ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the pressure levels in both sides of the piercing cylinder ~~(8)~~ are monitored.

4. (new) A method of operating a tube-extrusion press having

a die having a cavity;

a holder for pressing a billet forward through the die;

a mandrel shiftable forward and backward and having a front end positionable in the die, whereby the billet pressed into the die around the mandrel is deformed into a tube;

a hydraulic cylinder having a piston connected to the mandrel and shiftable therewith, the cylinder defining a front ring compartment between the piston and the die and a rear compartment;

a pump for supplying pressure to the cylinder; and

a tank connectable to the cylinder,

the method comprising the steps of:

operating the pump such that it supplies a pressure in excess of what is needed to prevent forward movement of the mandrel into the die during extrusion; and

bleeding pressure from the front compartment through a control valve to a tank to control the position of the mandrel relative to the die.

5. (new) The method defined in claim 4, further comprising the step of

maintaining the outlet pressure of the cylinder at a fixed pressure.

6. (new) The method defined in claim 4, further comprising the steps of:

monitoring the pressures in the front and rear compartments and controlling the pump in accordance therewith.